

## PROTOCOLS FOR SCREENING PREGNANT WOMEN FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### Screening Policy:

All pregnant women shall be asked routine questions regarding domestic violence issues in their lives. A sample of questions that may be used is listed below:

- Is your partner excited about the baby?
- How is your family reacting to this?
- How are you and your partner getting along? Is he helping you to complete tasks that you are unable to do?
- How are things at home?
- Is anything preventing you from coming to the clinic?
- Since your pregnancy began, have you been kicked, slapped, or otherwise physically hurt by someone?
- Within the last year has anyone forced you to engage in sexual activities that made you feel uncomfortable?

The following indicators require timely follow-up:

- Late and/or sporadic access to prenatal care
- Injury to the breast(s) and/or the abdomen
- Divorce or separation during pregnancy
- Vaginal bleeding
- Self-induced or attempted abortion
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Miscarriage
- Multiple abuse injury sites
- Low maternal weight gain
- Short inter-pregnancy interval
- Poor nutrition
- Premature labor
- Depression or less happiness about the pregnancy
- Suicidal ideation
- Frequent clinic visits for somatic complaints (insomnia, hyperventilation, etc.)
- Recurrent STD's, pelvic infections or HIV
- Evidence of noncompliance with treatment/care plan

If a case of domestic violence is identified and the woman is willing, the referral process shall be implemented. Alabama has shelters statewide that can provide counseling support for victims of domestic violence. The statewide hotline number is **1-800-650-6522**. Additionally, a county-based shelter directory is included. Local shelter crisis lines can be reached at their crisis numbers.

If a woman is not willing to call the shelter, the case manager should encourage the completion of a safety plan. The plan can help the woman better prepare for her safety when a violent situation arises.